



Remarks

Claims 1-26 are pending in this application. In the last Office Action, the Examiner rejected all the claims as being indefinite. More specifically, the Examiner has cited the paragraph located at Page 2, lines 5-10 of the Background section of the specification. In order to overcome this section, Applicant deleted the offending paragraph.

The Examiner has also rejected claims 1-19 as being unpatentable in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,688,836 issued to Yamamoto et al ("Yamamoto"). Some of the claims have been rejected as being anticipated, while others as obvious in view of the reference. Applicant has amended claim 1 to overcome these rejections. The paragraph at Col. 3, lines 52-57 of Yamamoto reads:

Then, when such a material is heat set at a temperature above the melting point of the polytetrafluoroethylene (thus, also above the melting point of the heat-meltable resin), the heat-meltable resin becomes completely integral in the node portions with the polytetrafluoroethylene which is present in the node portions 1 as shown in FIG. 2.

Therefore, the heat-meltable resin hardly contributes to the formation of the fibril portions 2, and the fibril portions mainly comprises the polytetrafluoroethylene. The node portions comprises the heat-meltable resin and the polytetrafluoroethylene which does not contribute to the formation of the fibril portions.

[Emphasis added.]

As can be seen from this excerpt, the Yamamoto nodes comprise resin and PTFE, whereas the nodes in the aggregates of the present invention do not. Additionally, these excerpts from Yamamoto show that the Yamamoto nodes are made integral by the resin used. Not by being tightly interconnected by fibrils, as with the present invention. Thus, in this amendment, claim 1 has been changed to highlight these differences.

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The Examiner has already indicted that claims 20-26 were allowable, but for the standing indefiniteness rejection which has been overcome by the above amendment to the specification.

Therefore, it is respectfully suggested that the claims are in condition for allowance, and that the application should be allowed. If, however, the Examiner believes that any outstanding issues remain, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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